FOR LOVE OF MARTA

The Strange Story of the Bride of a Day.

"AH, Senor, he was a man of science, a student profundo, a genius triumfante!"

"But, Conrado," I asked, "what did he accomplish? What great truth did he discover and leave as a legacy to suffering humanity?"

My New Mexican guide regards me with surprise and disapproval; then an expression of pity flashes between his half-closed eyes, and I read his thought.

"Santa Maria!" he is thinking. "Is it not sad that a man who can read and write has learned nothing of the great Prof. Aramburo?"

I beseech him to enlighten me, and he undertakes this portion of my education with a gravity befitting the difficulty of the task.

"Prof. Aramburo was a man of extraordinary mental gifts," he begins. "He was a doctor who healed the sick for love of healing, and whose wealth made monetary recompense a matter of indifference to him. He was a man in middle life when he came to New Mexico from Paris and settled here upon the Rio Grande. He was born here, but he had been educated in France, and had made his name famous in that country. His repute as a physician was well known when he returned to live in Espanola and we were proud to claim him as our countryman.

"He was a grave man, with piercing dark eyes that looked from under overhanging brows. He seemed to read your soul before you had time to scan his furrowed face. He was one of those people whom men admire, but who are rarely beloved by women. He had few flatteries upon his rather silent lips. He had passed so much time studying the bacterial explanation of disease that he had given little thought to social matters and little heed to women. Yet he had been with us but half a year when he married the fairest daughter of Espanola.

"Her name was Marta. Dios grandes! What a perfect type of womanhood she was! Every tenderfoot who touched upon our soil was enamored of her beauty, and when he tried to win her he was likely to be shot like a rat for his presumption, to be struck down by the keen blade of some Mexican punal, or to disappear, only the good God knows whither. Marta's lovers would never suffer a tenderfoot to beguile her from her native town of Espanola. It has been said that every year when the services of expiation were held in our mother church of Santa Cruz the men who loved Marta and who had committed crimes through jealousy of her were always in the procession of the penitentes.

"You do not know the services of expiation? When you have traversed another mile of the burning sand you will see the old adobe church of Santa Cruz de la Canarda. It is the oldest church in America, and it has witnessed more scourging of the flesh, more bloodshed, more cruel penance, than any other in the kingdom of God.

"Once a year, at Holy Week, the image of the Blessed Virgin is placed in the campo santo before the church and the ground for many yards around it is strewn knee-deep with cactus. Over the poisonous spines of this cruel plant the penitentes march with naked feet or crawl upon their bare knees toward the Mother of God. They pray for forgiveness while they scourge their breasts with thongs or slash their bodies with punals, until the steps of the church and the ground about it are splashed with blood, which has not time to dry, even in this arid atmosphere, before the sanguinary shower has fallen a score of times. This is where the love of Marta led the men of Espanola.

"Yet she married a man who had scarcely courted her, who had devoted more time to the study of cholera germs than to all the daughters of Eve. Perhaps the devil of ambition was in her blood, and she imagined that she would like to enslave the wisest and most renowned man she had ever known. Perhaps it pleased her fancy to prove to Senor Aramburo's young nephew that she did not care a centavo for him. At all events, she married the professor, the great doctor, the famous pathologist, and he took her to his home upon the Rio Grande.

"I wish I could describe to you how she looked when he brought her home. I was the butler in her husband's house, and I stood in the doorway when they arrived. She came up the path which parted the gorgeous scarlet cacti and the milk white yuccas, flowering upon every side, and her walk seemed the triumphal progress of a queen. She was a graceful, sinuous creature, with long, dark eyes, and small, white teeth, with the color of the pomegranate in her lips and cheeks. The sun shone upon her blue black hair and jeweled gown, and I fancied that the very atmosphere about her seemed flashing, scintillating, and iridescent with color. She spoke graciously to her husband's servants, but I had a shuddering premonition that when she entered the house peace flew out of the dwelling.

"Still, there was some seductive witchery about her, and I saw that the professor loved her. He was a taciturn man, who had not acquired the felicitous power of expressing his feelings, but there were depths of tenderness in his eyes when he brought Marta home which had never dwelt in them before. There was new eargerness in his voice, new elasticity in his step, and a new smile upon his lips. With all his knowledge, he was as simple as a child in his judgment of women, and he believed that Marta loved him! He was impatient when a messenger came for him to visit a dying ranchero, and for the first time in his life he went reluctantly to minister relief to the suffering. In a few hours his most intimate friends and relatives were to dine with him, and he had hoped to spend the time before their arrival alone with Marta. Still, he was faithful to his profession, the noblest one under the smile of heaven.

"Night had fallen before the guests arrived, and Marta left her bed chamber and stood upon her balcony. I watched her from the window of a darkened room. She was unconscious of my nearness. The night was silent and perfumed. A young white moon shone rather coldly upon the Rio Grande, and the river looked like molten silver under the pale reflection. Marta stood motionless, one hand raised high above her head and clasping a slendar pillar of the balcony, seemingly in rapt contemplation of the night. The far away voice of a coyote, crying like a woman in mortal pain, was the only sound to be heard. There was not a rag of cloud in the heavens, and the young wife of the greatest genius of New Mexico was a fitting part of a profoundly beautiful and almost solemn scene.

"There was a poisonous vine twining about the pillar she was clasping, and between its leaves depended clusters of soft, deciduous berries. Suddenly I observed a change in her attitude. She had not altered her pose, excepting that her figure had grown tense and rigid. Her grasp upon the pillar had tightened, and the bruised juice of a cluster of berries was oozing through her fingers, staining them crimson as the blood upon the campo santo. She was listening intently, breathlessly. She could hear no sound of footsteps upon the sand outside, but her delicate nostrils had detected the odor of a cigar before the man who was smoking it came up the walk leading to the house.

"It was Ricardo, her husband's nephew. He had been absent from Espanola since Holy Week, and had returned in time to eat at the feast of his uncle's wedding. Marta had heard he was coming, and at her request he had been kept in ignorance of the marriage.

"He did not notice her at first, but she saw him plainly in the white moonlight. He was a strong, supple young man of about her own age, and rather fair of face. There were sensitive lines about his mouth, and when he smiled his smile betokened some sweetness of disposition, partly contradicted by his threatening, dark eyes. Marta leaned over her balcony, and softly called to him:

"'Ricardo! Hola, Ricardo!'

"He stopped upon the little plaza below, transfixed with astonishment.

"'Marta!' he cried, 'Marta, why are you here?'

"Her manner was mocking, insolent, defiant.

"'I am here by right of possession,' she said. 'I have the honor of being the mistress of this house, and of being your aunt, my sainted Ricardo! I married the great man, your uncle, this morning, and he has left me thus early in our honeymoon to minister to the sick and suffering. Look, Ricardo, at the happiest woman in New Mexico!'

"'Marta,' he besought her, 'tell me this is not true. Tell me it is a foolish jest you are perpetrating upon me. Tell me you have not been guilty of this irrevocable, this wicked act!'

"'Now you are brutal to your relative,' she said, 'and disrespectable to your uncle's worthy wife. You have forgotten to be polite since you have joined the cruel order of the penitentes. You have forgotten to be gallant since you began to study for the priesthood. You have failed to felicitate me upon my marriage. You have even forgotten to salute your aunt. Where are your manners, my good child? Why do you not speak? Your face is as pallid in this moonlight as the pale yucca-flowers behind you, or as my own white bridal gown.'

"He was graceful and quick as a panther. He sprang and caught the railing of her balcony with his sinewy hands, then drew himself up until he had gained a footing beside her. From my hiding place I could see and hear them distinctly. She was looking at him mockingly with her narrow eyes, but her face was very pale.

"'You did not hear of my intended marriage,' she continued; 'but I heard a vast amount of chatter about you. I have been told that at Holy Week you joined the procession of the penitentes, and that since then you have been in seclusion, studying for the priesthood. Ah, what a priest you will be, with your tempers, your jealousies, and your love of the world! I know why you pierced your flesh and prayed at the campo santo. You sought forgiveness for the punishment you gave Juan Cancio when he called me a Delilah, a she tiger, who tempted men only to betray them. Since then you have stayed away from me, because you were unwilling I should disturb you at your devotions, and because you were determined that I should no more trouble your sacerdotal career. Is this not true, Ricardo?'

"'There is truth in what you have said,' he admitted.

"'And you are to be a priest,' she resumed. 'Ay de mi! What a father confessor you will be! With what worldly eyes you will look upon the supplicantes, and what an absence of solemnity will be in your tones! You were resolved that I should never tempt you to turn your back upon your duty. You need not have feared such sweet temptation. So long as I had the great professor at my feet, I could scarcely think of poor Ricardo!'

"Her words appeared to prick him like the point of a poniard. He answered her quickly and with reckless disregard of consequences:

"'It is long since I gave up my intention of studying for the church. You drove that purpose out of my heart. You have cared no more for me than for the sage bush growning at our feet, and I have always known the hopelessness of my passion for you. It has led me into trouble, even into crime, and it has sent me shuddering across the campo santo in search of peace of mind. You taught me that I was unfit to be a teacher before the altar of the church, and that my place was with the humble suplicantes.'

"She was panting with astonishment and triumph. When he ceased speaking she spoke her thought—her voice full and sweet, and resonant with feeling:

"'You must have loved me, Ricardo.'

"'Yes,' he admitted, 'I loved you. I cared no more to drink from the sacred chalice of the church, for I thirsted for the red wine of your lips. I cared no more to breathe the incense of the holy eucharist, for I panted for the perfume of your breath. No sacred image could hold my thoughts while your form stood between me and my way to heaven!'

"'Ah, you loved me!' she repeated: 'you, the anchorite, who I believed could never be enslaved by mortal woman; you, the only man for whose love I have hungered. How blind, how dull, we have been, Ricardo!'

"She had burst into a tempest of weeping, and he clasped her and kissed her, forgetful now of every moral obligation. All men lose sight of honor sometimes in their lives, and Ricardo was like others. Forgive him, senor, for he was very human, and he loved. If you had once seen Marta, you would not have blamed him. His hot tears fell upon her upturned face, and the blood seemed to rush through his veins like an overcharged river. He besought her to quit the house before the professor should return, or the guests arrive. Ricardo was no longer a penitente. He was a lover without conscience, and he implored her to fly with him.

"She was willing, eager to go. When he released her for a moment she sprang into her room in quest of a cloak to wrap about her bare shoulders. She would have gone to perdition with this man, who had long wounded her vanity by his pretended indifference, and who had appeared to be hopelessly removed from her by his devotion to the church. There was no whisper of conscience to mar her triumph. But when she entered her room to make ready for her departure she came face to face with the professor.

"He had returned unnoticed, and had entered his home by a doorway that was rarely used. Doubtless he had desired to surprise his bride by his speedy return. He came out upon the balcony now, and the man and the woman who had wronged him shrank a little from him, wondering if he had heard, or seen, or surmised what had been passing between them. As he betrayed no sign of displeasure, they breathed more freely and grew composed.

"'You are here in time to congratulate us,' the professor said, 'and to drink to the health of the bride before the other guests arrive. This is most kind, Ricardo. Bring us wine and glasses,' he called to me. And then to his guest he said: 'We will pledge the health of Marta in blood red wine.'

"I said to myself that this great man was very simple in spite of all his wisdom, and I reflected that if he could have read their guilty hearts he would have poured blood rather than wine into their glasses. The night was warm, and beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead.

"'We must have a long, cool drink,' he said. 'Draw the table out here, Conrado, while I bring the ice.'

"He had learned to manufacture ice in a curious little machine he had brought from Paris, and was very vain of this small accomplishment. When I had broken the ice and had poured the wine over it in the glasses, he proposed a toast which the three drank standing.

"'We will drink to Marta, my wife,' he said; 'the woman I have loved and trusted.'

"Ricardo's hands were trembling and he drained his glass as though he felt the need of the stimulant it contained. Then the professor dismissed me, and I went away.

"When the guests arrived I came back to call my master and mistress. They were seated with Ricardo, where I had left them. The decanter, the glasses and the bowl of melting ice were upon the table before them, but the three whom I had seen an hour before in vigorous health were dumbly staring with sightless eyes over their empty glasses. Senor, I cried out for help, but they were far beyond human assistance.

"There was, of course, an investigation, and then it was noticed that a deadly effluvium seemed rising from the melted ice. Puf! It was so foul that the authorities made a chemical analysis of it, and they found it to be filled with the most poisonous of living bacilli. More ice was taken from the professor's little freezing apparatus, and examined with the same thoroughness, and this also was found to be full of these deadly germs. Cold had no destroying effect upon them, and when they were introduced into the system of a healthy llama it fell dead in three minutes.

"Madre de Dios! I knew the secret of the tragedy that had robbed the world of its greatest scientist, that had murdered the most beautiful woman of New Mexico, and that had made a martyr of the most unholy penitente of the church. I knew that the professor must have taken the ice from his laboratory, instead of the pantry where the table ice was always kept. My reason told me that he had seen Marta in Ricardo's impassioned embrace, that he had heard fragments of their conversation. There had been hidden meaning in the toast he pledged to 'the woman he had trusted.'

"I alone knew of his incentive to commit this act. The people of Espanola marveled at what they considered an accident, and called him a martyr to science. They fancied that death lurked in all the manufactured ice, and that the enforced freezing of water had in some way created the destroying bacilli which had robbed them of their friends. They could not believe that a man would kill himself when he possessed the right to pass his days with such a woman as Marta. They could not imagine that their wise and gentle Aramburo would take his life, or that of a helpless woman, or that of a devotee to the holy church."

"But surely you told the authorities what you had heard and seen?"

Conrado glances at me, then shrugs his shoulders.

"Not I," he says. "Do you think I would bring ignominy upon the greatest genius of this century? Do you think it was in my heart to prevent the lovers of Marta from showering her grave with tears and flowers? Do you believe my soul would ever be at rest if I brought disgrace upon one who had sought expiation upon the blessed campo santo? Senor, God forbid."

FRANCES ISABEL CURRIE.

IN EXILE.

I.

You exile me, but not my song.
Would you, if you had known, my sweet,
That I should speed this verse along
Until it melted at your feet,
Loose from its cage this lark of song
To drop and sing to you, my sweet?

II.

You exile me, but not my song.
Could you if you had willed, my sweet?
For homing birds fly swift and strong
Through wet and dry and frost and heat,
And coming, singing the whole day long,
Unless their song be stilled, my sweet.

III.

You exile me, but not my song.
The lark knows where his nest is, sweet;
And though his flight be far and long,
He comes at night where rest is, sweet.
His little compass is not wrong
And points him fluttering to your feet.

IV.

You exile me, but not my song.
Do you not tire of striving, sweet?
For in your heart these birds belong,
In mine they caged and captive beat;
For their sweet mates—your thoughts—they long;
Like me they would be wiving, sweet.

ALGERNON TASSIN.

DANFORTH'S DILEMMA

How Reminiscence Brought a Burglar to Bay.

MR. HOWARD DANFORTH, alias John Detch, alias Mortimer Ritter, alias H. L. Davis—by which last namehe was just now registered in the office below—this gentleman of many appellations sat in his room on the third floor back, before a coal fire, toasting his shins and cogitating on his fortunes.

Looked at in one light, these were at the very ebb. If payment had been demanded he could not have put up the money for the fire before which he was comforting himself, much less for the delectable dinner he had eaten some hours before. But payment was not demanded. Being a specious gentleman of good address, with a fine, open countenance, and a large and stylish portmanteau, he was welcomed to the privileges of the accommodating hostelry without question.

Besides this outward show, which was always a large part of his stock in trade, his entire capital consisted of two twenty-five-cent pieces, a Colombian half dollar, and an unlimited amount of "nerve." Upon this latter Mr. Danforth relied, both to take him through certan tight places and to replenish his funds when that became absolutely necessary. It had become necessary now and he was only waiting until the proper time to take prompt and effective action.

The goddess of fortune, his only acknowledged mistress, had placed in his hands the opportunity for the replenishment of his purse. That opportunity took the shape of a bridal couple, who had arrived that morning with an atmosphere of love and three trunks. The groom was a slight, pale young fellow, with a downy mustache; the bride, a willowy girl, so enveloped in furs that one could not see her face, but with a deliciously small ankle, and a charming turn of the wrist when holding up her skirts. These things Mr. Danforth admired as became a man of taste; but most of all was his attention attracted by the sparkling ear drops that twinkled from under her veil. He was an amateur in diamonds, and knew a good thing when he saw it, as well as Grubb, the pawnbroker—who, by the way, could be counted on to discount those same diamonds if luck turned that way. An examination of the register, and a little casual conversation with the clerk, showed these young people to be Francis Drummond and wife, and that they were established in a suite of rooms on the third floor front.

And so Mr. Danforth sat and meditated on these things, and waited for the clock in the church tower around the corner to strike 3, which was his hour for business. This rule of action was based on a great deal of practical investigation as to the precise time when people sleep soundest. As every keen observer knows, 2 o'clock in the morning is the hour when the world turns over in bed, yawns, and goes to sleep again, and for good reasons, 3 o'clock is the time when it is again sleeping soundly.

By way of preparation, Mr. Danforth carefully removed his pointed patent leather shoes. Then he opened his bag, and extracted therefrom a pair of heavy felt slippers, which fastened about the ankle with an elastic. He also took out a silver mounted revolver. It was not loaded, and was only intended to display to persons who happened to be wakeful, and who were disposed to express surprise at the presence of an unknown and unbidden visitor. In all his experience, which extended over some five years of fortune hunting in two hemispheres, he had met but one man who cared to look into the muzzle of the revolver and at the same time make a disturbance. This man had compelled Mr. Danforth to hit him between the eyes with his left and "upper cut" him with his right, before the intruder's exit was undisputed. He now adjusted the slippers, placed the ornamental firearm in his right hand coat pocket, and resumed his attitude of shin toasting.

Half an hour later, when the clock struck 3, he was at the door of the suite on the third floor. How he got through the door it is not necessary to state, but to a man of his experience a lock or a bolt was as little binding as a spider's thread, and to give away the secret of unbolting a door from the outside would be a poor bit of policy. He found himself in a dressing room. With a match that had neither the cackle of the "parlor," nor the odor of the "sulphur," he lighted the gas. In the bedroom beyond a tiny night lamp was burning, and he paused for an instant at the door to make sure of the regular breathing of the sleepers. Then he turned to the toilet table, which stood between the windows. It was overspread with a most elaborate and tempting display. There were silver backed brushes of all sizes and kinds, hand mirrors and tiny teeth mirrors, cut glass perfume bottles, knives and scissors and dainty powder boxes. Mr. Danforth looked at all these with a loving eye; he could appreciate fine things, even though they belonged to another. He even touched his cheek with perfume, and smoothed his hair a little, as he looked into the mirror. He was really a very good-looking fellow.

But other matters pressed. Opening the top drawer he fumbled through it. There was a profusion of neckwear, collars and cuffs, underclothing and fine linen. There were also buttons for the cuffs, studs of fine gold and pins of precious stones, but Mr. Danforth put them aside. He opened the next drawer. The linen was finer. It was fluffed and ribboned. There was a suspiciously large pile of handkerchiefs in one corner. He lifted them and disclosed a jewel box of soft leather. His eyes sparkled, and he snapped up the lid. The diamonds within sparkled back at him—two as prettily set stones as he had ever seen, in ear drops; a brooch of diamonds and rubies; a splendid tortoisesheli comb topped with rare diamonds. Then there were some rings of various sorts, a pretty little pearl necklace, and a bracelet.

He selected a large silk handkerchief and wrapped the jewels carefully in it, making a neat bundle, which he put into his left hand coat pocket. He closed the box and replaced it. He even laid back the linen, and smoothed it into place, for he liked order. Then, having put things as he found them, something possessed him to go into the further room, where the sleepers were.

He walked quickly on flat foot to the door, and after listening a minute, entered. The night lamp cast a dull glow over the objects in the room. The light fell on the face of the sleeping woman, and warmed into a pleasing color the hair that lay on the pillow. She was lying on her side, with her arm thrown out, and her lips just parted in the effort of respiration. Mr. Danforth went a step nearer. She turned a little, and the yellow ruffle of her gown fell away from her throat. He could see her face clearly. He stopped, grasped nervously at the footboard, and put his hand to his eyes; then it went involuntarily to his left pocket. He leaned farther over and peered hard into the girl's face. His lips smiled, but there was no smile in his eyes. "Louise!" he muttered, and the room with the little dot of light faded away. In its place he saw a long stretch of white beach with the waves coming in, lap, lap. The sandpipers "teetered" along the shore, and the gulls screamed in the sky. He saw a big white umbrella, and under it a girl sketching, while at her feet lay a man reading aloud from a magazine. Once he caught up her hand and kissed it. The face of the girl was the same that lay on the pillow, and the man was Howard Danforth.

He thought of a good many things that had happened that summer, and he thought of them a little sadly. Things turned out queerly, very queerly; if it had not been for—but he smiled grimly, and put that behind him.

The room seemed to be getting very hot. Perhaps he was nervous; yet there were few things, no matter how startling that could upset his coolness. But what was all that rumble from the street below, and what——? He raised his head and sniffed at the air. Just then a cry floated up to him from below, a boy's shrill voice, and it said "Fire!"

Simultaneously he heard the clang of a patrol bell. He went into the outer room. It was hotter than the other, and his nostrils smarted. He jerked open the door and went into the hall. The smoke rolled heavily along it. What was to be done must be done quickly. Catching up a white wrapper of flannel from a chair, he bounded back into the sleeping room. He laid his hot hand on the forehead of the man. The jar wakened him, and he sat up, wonderingly.

"Get up!" said Danforth. "The place is on fire! Don't stop to dress, but tell your wife to throw on this wrapper. Hurry!"

"What is it?" said the girl startled suddenly into consciousness. "What is it Frank? Who was that?"

But Mr. Danford was already in the outer room. He stepped to the window and looked down. The street was full of men. He felt of the rope that hung coiled on a hook by the window.

"We will try the stairway first," he said, as the Drummonds joined him. The husband had hurriedly donned his trousers, and was struggling with his coat.

"Howard, is it you?" exclaimed Mrs. Drummond. "How did you come to be here? And can I take nothing?" she added despairingly, as they ran into the hall.

"Nothing," he answered, ignoring the first question. He recalled afterward how beautiful she looked in her loose white wrapper, with her hair fluffed about, and fright in her eyes.

They went to the staircase. A battalion of black smoke and red flame charged up at them.

"There's a stairway at the other end of the hall," said Drummond; "perhaps we could go by that."

"No use," panted Danforth, and he pointed to the flame that was already licking around the corner at the far end of the hall. "We'll have to go by the window of your room."

They go into the room and shut the door. Danforth began to uncoil the rope. "It's not very dangerous, if the fire doesn't get here before we get away. You must go first, Mrs. Drummond. Better put something under your arms so that the rope won't cut you. So——" and he slipped the loop over her shoulders and drew it tight. "Now, if you are ready, get out on the sill, and let yourself over. We'll hold you perfectly secure, and it won't take a minute."

She hesitated for the shadow of a second. Her face grew white. Then she turned and kissed her husband, and stepped away quickly upon the window sill. She swung off, bumped against the wall, and cried out. The men lowered her rapidly, but for all that it seemed as if she would never reach the ground. It was getting hotter and the little waves of smoke were oozing in by the door.

At last the rope slackened. They could see her lifted in the arms of the men, a white dot in the blackness. The rope swung free, and Danforth pulled it back with great jerks.

"No, no!" interposed Drummond. "I can slide down it. It will take too long to lower me, and you mustn't take any risks. Wait till I get my wife's jewels; I can save them." He made a dive for the drawer, and took out the jewel case, which he slipped into his pocket. The glass in the transom cracked and the flames peered in and lit up the room.

"Did you ever swarm down a rope?" asked Danforth, as he looked at the young man's hands.

"No; but I can try. If I fall——" But the other cut him short and flung the noose over his head, almost roughly.

"Now, you're off!" he urged, and the young fellow went over the sill. He was not heavy, but Danforth was out of training. His muscles strained and his joints cracked, as the rope paid out slowly. His eyes smarted, and once he had to take a hitch around the hook and lean out for breath. Then he shut his eyes and lowered away, but his breath came fast and his head was dizzy.

Again the rope slackened. With a gasp Danforth sprang upon the sill and let himself over. He twisted his leg into the rope and swung off. He breathed more freely after he got away from the window, but the hemp grew hot under his hands, and he thought he must let go. But again his mind helped his muscles, and he still went down, down, past the second window, out of which the flames were darting; down, until he dropped into the arms that were reached up to him. There was a cheer from the sympathetic crowd that had gathered in the street.

Young Drummond caught him by the hand. "You have saved our lives," he said, simply, "and I thank you. You are an old friend of my wife, I believe."

"Yes," put in Mrs. Drummond; "this is Mr. Danforth—and this is my husband, Mr. Francis Drummond. But how did you happen to come to us?"

Danforth rested for a moment to gain his senses.

"Easy enough to explain if one were to explain it," he said, with an attempt at a laugh. "I am a wolf in sheep's clothing. But you mustn't stand here. There's a hotel a little way around the corner; you would better go there. We can do no good for this place. It's gone up. It isn't pleasant to lose one's clothes, but such things have to be borne."

Mrs. Drummond placed herself between the men, and took an arm of each. Thus they walked through the crowd of people, stopping now and then to look back at the burning building.

At the hotel steps Danforth paused. "I shall have to go back," he explained. "I have some things to look after. You would better go straight to bed. You can do nothing till morning. Then you can get fitted out. It's too bad—and a wedding journey, too!"

"But you will be here in the morning, will you not?" asked Drummond.

"Yes; we shall want to hear the whole story," said Mrs. Drummond. "Good night," and she put out her hand. "I will thank you more in the morning," she added, as he touched it.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Danforth, handing him a small packet made up in a handkerchief; "I beg your pardon, but I think your wife must have forgotten her diamonds."

Then before Drummond could speak he turned and went back into the crowd.

FREDERICK MILLER SMITH.